

REFERENCES

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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

THE HERONRY AT LAKE JIPE Lack (1977) referred to two visits to this heronry on 31 July and 26 December 1976 when approximately 50 or less pairs of six species were observed nesting. Following reports that breeding was again in progress, I visited the heronry on 28 March 1978, and it was soon clear that many more birds were breeding than during Lack's visits in 1976.

The heronry, just inside Tanzania, was situated at one end of a large swampy reed island about 150 m², and was almost certainly the same one visited and discussed by Lack. (Lake Jipe is actually shared by Kenya and Tanzania.) The Tsavo National Park boatman who accompanied me told me that the site had been occupied since late December 1977.

The island itself was virtually impossible to penetrate and, as such, was free from disturbance by local fishermen and visitors. At a few points it was possible to beach the boat into the reeds, and from a vantage point on top of the boat estimates of the nesting activity could then be made. Due to the denseness of the reeds it was impossible to make any counts of nests other than those where large young were visible. The composition of the heronry on 28 March 1978 can be summarized as follows:

Phalacrocorax africanus Long-tailed Cormorant One of the commonest species with at least 50 pairs nesting, the majority of which appeared to be tending young at all stages.

Ardea alba Great White Heron About 20-25 pairs nesting. As many birds were sitting tight it was impossible to determine the contents of any nests.

Ardea melanocephala Black-headed Heron Approximately 10 pairs nesting, most of which were sitting tight either on eggs or with small young.

Ardea purpurea Purple Heron Probably the most abundant heron present with at least 50 pairs nesting, most of which appeared to have large and almost fully fledged young.

Ardeola ibis Cattle Egret At least 50 pairs nesting, the majority of which appeared to be feeding young at all stages.

Ardeola ralloides Squacco Heron At least five pairs nesting, all with large and fully fledged young, some of which were making their first attempts to fly.

Threskiornis aethiopica Sacred Ibis About 10-12 pairs nesting, though the contents of all nests were either totally or partially hidden from view. Some probably contained young.

Platalea alba African Spoonbill About 10-12 pairs nesting, some of which were sitting tight, presumably on eggs, while others tended small young.

The following two species were also present at the heronry but breeding, although probable, was not positively established:

Egretta ardesiaca Black Heron Although this is normally quite plentiful at Lake Jipe, only one was seen at the heronry. It circled the island for a short time before dropping into the densest area of reeds. Nothing at the time or later could positively confirm whether or not it was breeding.

Egretta garzetta Little Egret One bird was seen perched amongst a group of nesting Cattle Egrets, and later dropped out of sight, possibly to a nearby nest.

The only other resident heron which occurs at Lake Jipe (although not seen at the heronry on this occasion) is the Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*. It is quite possible that there may have been some hidden in the densest parts of the island.

It would appear that the Lake Jipe heronry, unique in that there are no trees on the island, provides a secure breeding ground for most Ardeidae and Threskiornithidae occurring in the area. Certainly, those species which are normally tree-nesters appear to have readily adapted to breeding amongst dense reeds where their nests, in many cases, were 3-4m above water level.

It is hoped that more accurate and regular data can be obtained from future visits to this heronry, for comparison with the heronries at Garsen and Kisumu.

REFERENCE

LACK, P. 1977. A small heronry at Lake Jipe, Tsavo. *Scopus* 1: 82.

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A ROOST OF BLACK-CHESTED SNAKE EAGLES IN THE SERENGETI, TANZANIA Between the first week of September and the first week of October 1976, as many as ten Black-chested Snake Eagles *Circaetus pectoralis* were seen roosting together in a pair of tall acacia trees on the south-eastern Serengeti Plains 4 km west of Lake Ndutu. The two trees were very close together on open short grass plains about 2 km from the edge of the *Acacia tortilis* woodlands that surround Lake Ndutu.

The birds were seen on about eight occasions by various observers. All sightings were around dawn and, after first light, two or three of the birds were usually seen on the ground but within 50 m of the trees. Later in the day, eagles of the same species were seen quite commonly in the air over the surrounding plains. The roost was not seen at any other time between June 1976 and November 1977. It may be significant that the roost was seen at the end of a particularly severe dry season.

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LARGE NUMBERS OF *FALCO AMURENSIS* IN TANZANIA On 13 January 1956 more than a thousand Eastern Red-footed Falcons *Falco amurensis* were seen from about 18.00 hrs until dusk, flying over Dodoma. A storm had passed earlier

Scopus 2: 48-49, June 1978